

Assembly Bill No. 2634

CHAPTER 296

An act to amend Section 52.1 of the Civil Code, relating to civil rights.

[Approved by Governor August 25, 2014. Filed with
Secretary of State August 25, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2634, Bradford. Civil rights.

Under existing law, if a person or persons, whether or not acting under color of law, interferes or attempts to interfere, by threats, intimidation, or coercion, with the exercise or enjoyment by any individual or individuals of rights secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or of the rights secured by the Constitution or laws of this state, the Attorney General, or any district attorney or city attorney is authorized to bring a civil action for injunctive and other appropriate equitable relief in the name of the people of the State of California, in order to protect the exercise or enjoyment of the right or rights secured. Existing law also authorizes an individual whose exercise or enjoyment of those rights has been interfered with, or attempted to be interfered with, as described, to institute and prosecute a civil action for damages, including, but not limited to, specified damages, injunctive relief, and other appropriate equitable relief to protect the peaceable exercise or enjoyment of the right or rights secured.

This bill would expand the relief authorized to be sought by an individual in a civil action to include appropriate equitable and declaratory relief to eliminate a pattern or practice of interference, or attempts to interfere, as described.

This bill would incorporate additional changes to Section 52.1 of the Civil Code proposed by AB 2617 that would become operative only if this bill and AB 2617 are both chaptered and this bill is chaptered last.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 52.1 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

52.1. (a) If a person or persons, whether or not acting under color of law, interferes by threats, intimidation, or coercion, or attempts to interfere by threats, intimidation, or coercion, with the exercise or enjoyment by any individual or individuals of rights secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or of the rights secured by the Constitution or laws of this state, the Attorney General, or any district attorney or city attorney may bring a civil action for injunctive and other appropriate equitable relief in the name of the people of the State of California, in order to protect the

peaceable exercise or enjoyment of the right or rights secured. An action brought by the Attorney General, any district attorney, or any city attorney may also seek a civil penalty of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000). If this civil penalty is requested, it shall be assessed individually against each person who is determined to have violated this section and the penalty shall be awarded to each individual whose rights under this section are determined to have been violated.

(b) Any individual whose exercise or enjoyment of rights secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or of rights secured by the Constitution or laws of this state, has been interfered with, or attempted to be interfered with, as described in subdivision (a), may institute and prosecute in his or her own name and on his or her own behalf a civil action for damages, including, but not limited to, damages under Section 52, injunctive relief, and other appropriate equitable relief to protect the peaceable exercise or enjoyment of the right or rights secured, including appropriate equitable and declaratory relief to eliminate a pattern or practice of conduct as described in subdivision (a).

(c) An action brought pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b) may be filed either in the superior court for the county in which the conduct complained of occurred or in the superior court for the county in which a person whose conduct complained of resides or has his or her place of business. An action brought by the Attorney General pursuant to subdivision (a) also may be filed in the superior court for any county wherein the Attorney General has an office, and in that case, the jurisdiction of the court shall extend throughout the state.

(d) If a court issues a temporary restraining order or a preliminary or permanent injunction in an action brought pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b), ordering a defendant to refrain from conduct or activities, the order issued shall include the following statement: VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER IS A CRIME PUNISHABLE UNDER SECTION 422.77 OF THE PENAL CODE.

(e) The court shall order the plaintiff or the attorney for the plaintiff to deliver, or the clerk of the court to mail, two copies of any order, extension, modification, or termination thereof granted pursuant to this section, by the close of the business day on which the order, extension, modification, or termination was granted, to each local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the residence of the plaintiff and any other locations where the court determines that acts of violence against the plaintiff are likely to occur. Those local law enforcement agencies shall be designated by the plaintiff or the attorney for the plaintiff. Each appropriate law enforcement agency receiving any order, extension, or modification of any order issued pursuant to this section shall serve forthwith one copy thereof upon the defendant. Each appropriate law enforcement agency shall provide to any law enforcement officer responding to the scene of reported violence, information as to the existence of, terms, and current status of, any order issued pursuant to this section.

(f) A court shall not have jurisdiction to issue an order or injunction under this section, if that order or injunction would be prohibited under Section 527.3 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(g) An action brought pursuant to this section is independent of any other action, remedy, or procedure that may be available to an aggrieved individual under any other provision of law, including, but not limited to, an action, remedy, or procedure brought pursuant to Section 51.7.

(h) In addition to any damages, injunction, or other equitable relief awarded in an action brought pursuant to subdivision (b), the court may award the petitioner or plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees.

(i) A violation of an order described in subdivision (d) may be punished either by prosecution under Section 422.77 of the Penal Code, or by a proceeding for contempt brought pursuant to Title 5 (commencing with Section 1209) of Part 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure. However, in any proceeding pursuant to the Code of Civil Procedure, if it is determined that the person proceeded against is guilty of the contempt charged, in addition to any other relief, a fine may be imposed not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or the person may be ordered imprisoned in a county jail not exceeding six months, or the court may order both the imprisonment and fine.

(j) Speech alone is not sufficient to support an action brought pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b), except upon a showing that the speech itself threatens violence against a specific person or group of persons; and the person or group of persons against whom the threat is directed reasonably fears that, because of the speech, violence will be committed against them or their property and that the person threatening violence had the apparent ability to carry out the threat.

(k) No order issued in any proceeding brought pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b) shall restrict the content of any person's speech. An order restricting the time, place, or manner of any person's speech shall do so only to the extent reasonably necessary to protect the peaceable exercise or enjoyment of constitutional or statutory rights, consistent with the constitutional rights of the person sought to be enjoined.

SEC. 1.5. Section 52.1 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

52.1. (a) If a person or persons, whether or not acting under color of law, interferes by threat, intimidation, or coercion, or attempts to interfere by threat, intimidation, or coercion, with the exercise or enjoyment by any individual or individuals of rights secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or of the rights secured by the Constitution or laws of this state, the Attorney General, or any district attorney or city attorney may bring a civil action for injunctive and other appropriate equitable relief in the name of the people of the State of California, in order to protect the peaceable exercise or enjoyment of the right or rights secured. An action brought by the Attorney General, any district attorney, or any city attorney may also seek a civil penalty of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000). If this civil penalty is requested, it shall be assessed individually against each person who is determined to have violated this section and the penalty shall

be awarded to each individual whose rights under this section are determined to have been violated.

(b) Any individual whose exercise or enjoyment of rights secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or of rights secured by the Constitution or laws of this state, has been interfered with, or attempted to be interfered with, as described in subdivision (a), may institute and prosecute in his or her own name and on his or her own behalf a civil action for damages, including, but not limited to, damages under Section 52, injunctive relief, and other appropriate equitable relief to protect the peaceable exercise or enjoyment of the right or rights secured, including appropriate equitable and declaratory relief to eliminate a pattern or practice of conduct as described in subdivision (a).

(c) An action brought pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b) may be filed either in the superior court for the county in which the conduct complained of occurred or in the superior court for the county in which a person whose conduct complained of resides or has his or her place of business. An action brought by the Attorney General pursuant to subdivision (a) also may be filed in the superior court for any county wherein the Attorney General has an office, and in that case, the jurisdiction of the court shall extend throughout the state.

(d) If a court issues a temporary restraining order or a preliminary or permanent injunction in an action brought pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b), ordering a defendant to refrain from conduct or activities, the order issued shall include the following statement: VIOLATION OF THIS ORDER IS A CRIME PUNISHABLE UNDER SECTION 422.77 OF THE PENAL CODE.

(e) The court shall order the plaintiff or the attorney for the plaintiff to deliver, or the clerk of the court to mail, two copies of any order, extension, modification, or termination thereof granted pursuant to this section, by the close of the business day on which the order, extension, modification, or termination was granted, to each local law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the residence of the plaintiff and any other locations where the court determines that acts of violence against the plaintiff are likely to occur. Those local law enforcement agencies shall be designated by the plaintiff or the attorney for the plaintiff. Each appropriate law enforcement agency receiving any order, extension, or modification of any order issued pursuant to this section shall serve forthwith one copy thereof upon the defendant. Each appropriate law enforcement agency shall provide to any law enforcement officer responding to the scene of reported violence, information as to the existence of, terms, and current status of, any order issued pursuant to this section.

(f) A court shall not have jurisdiction to issue an order or injunction under this section, if that order or injunction would be prohibited under Section 527.3 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(g) An action brought pursuant to this section is independent of any other action, remedy, or procedure that may be available to an aggrieved individual

under any other provision of law, including, but not limited to, an action, remedy, or procedure brought pursuant to Section 51.7.

(h) In addition to any damages, injunction, or other equitable relief awarded in an action brought pursuant to subdivision (b), the court may award the petitioner or plaintiff reasonable attorney's fees.

(i) A violation of an order described in subdivision (d) may be punished either by prosecution under Section 422.77 of the Penal Code, or by a proceeding for contempt brought pursuant to Title 5 (commencing with Section 1209) of Part 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure. However, in any proceeding pursuant to the Code of Civil Procedure, if it is determined that the person proceeded against is guilty of the contempt charged, in addition to any other relief, a fine may be imposed not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or the person may be ordered imprisoned in a county jail not exceeding six months, or the court may order both the imprisonment and fine.

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(k) No order issued in any proceeding brought pursuant to subdivision (a) or (b) shall restrict the content of any person's speech. An order restricting the time, place, or manner of any person's speech shall do so only to the extent reasonably necessary to protect the peaceable exercise or enjoyment of constitutional or statutory rights, consistent with the constitutional rights of the person sought to be enjoined.

(l) The rights, penalties, remedies, forums, and procedures of this section shall not be waived by contract except as provided in Section 51.7.

SEC. 2. Section 1.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 52.1 of the Civil Code proposed by both this bill and Assembly Bill 2617. It shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2015, (2) each bill amends Section 52.1 of the Civil Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Assembly Bill 2617, in which case Section 1 of this bill shall not become operative.